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## ABSTRACT

This paper stresses the unified nature of the Languages for Special Purposes (LSP) operation, and argues for increased research at every phase. It deals specifically with the following topics: (1) a procedural ESP model in which the ESP activity is conceived of as a whole, and the various stages in the planning and mounting of an ESP program are identified; (2) the use of illustration in written scientific texts and in scientific lectures; (3) lexical cohesion in scientific discourse focusing on the device of lexical substitution in unscripted lectures and the characteristic patterns operating within data of this kind; (4) the use of graphs and figures in written scientific discourse, involving a comparison between the discourse characteristics associated with the use of tables and characteristics associated with the use of graphs; and (5) a description of the steps in developing a course in English for Occupational Purposes designed specifically for the communication needs of service personnel in a university setting. (Author/AMH)

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THEORY AND PRACTICE IN ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES\*

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CONTENTS

1. A Procedural ESP Model

The ESP activity is conceived of as a whole and the various stages in the planning and mounting of an ESP program are identified. The stages described include the formulation and the use of information-gathering instruments; the analysis of the resulting data; an inventory of operational language skills; the identification and description of the characteristics of the target language area; and the translation of these into units of instruction.

2. Illustration in Two Modes of Scientific Discourse

The use of illustration in two modes of scientific discourse is described and compared. The description demonstrates that the use of illustration in written scientific text is fundamentally different from the use of illustration in unscripted scientific lectures. The differences are described, and implications for the development of instructional materials for listening and reading comprehension are drawn.

3. Lexical Cohesion in Scientific Discourse

Halliday and Hasan (1974) have provided a framework within which certain linguistic relationships holding within text/discourse can be identified and described. This presentation focuses upon the cohesive device of lexical substitution

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in unscripted lectures and describes the characteristic patterns operating within data of this kind. Implications for teaching are offered.

4. Graph and Figure Interpretation in Scientific Discourse

The use of different kinds of graphs and figures in written scientific discourse is examined and a comparison made between the discourse characteristics associated with the use of tables and those associated with the use of graphs. Implications for the preparation of scientific reading materials are drawn.

5. English for Occupational Purposes

A brief of the mounting of an EOP project for building services staff is offered stressing those aspects of the task which deal with the procedures used to identify the language needs of the participants and the creation of instructional units for unsophisticated language learners.

6. References

## THEORY AND PRACTICE IN ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES

R. Mackay, M. Bosquet, A. Cyr,  
E. Gatabonton, and N. Spada.

The purpose of this paper is to stress the unified nature of the LSP operation and to argue for increased research at every phase. The types of research at each phase are briefly mentioned and four pieces of exploratory or operational research are summarized. These deal with descriptions of different aspects and uses of academic language, namely, (i) illustration in two modes of scientific discourse, (ii) lexical cohesion in spoken discourse, (iii) graph and figure interpretation and (iv) a project in the teaching of English for occupational purposes. Most of the increasing number of LSP projects being reported on in the current literature have, to a greater or lesser extent, the essential characteristics of modern curriculum development projects (see Fig. 1).

These phases constitute only the first of three principal stages:

CREATION  
MAINTENANCE  
DISSEMINATION

John Sinclair (University of Birmingham) observes that the excitement of the creation stage ensures its availability for examination but that there is little evidence of adequate effort being put into maintenance and dissemination. This may be a temporary phenomenon due primarily to the relative recency of

LSP projects and there is evidence that some of the longer established projects are approaching maturity in the dissemination stage.

However, there is another possible explanation for the relative dearth of information relating to the maintenance and dissemination stages. LSP programmes, unless they are soundly based on adequate research at each of the phases of the creation stage, are likely to have a life only as long as it takes the consumers, i.e. the teachers and the students to decide whether or not they are benefitting from it. If they feel that they are not, then the program is unlikely to reach even the maintenance stage. Dissatisfied teachers have, as have dissatisfied students, effective ways of bringing programmes to a grinding halt.

Hence, it is with the creation stage that we are particularly concerned in this paper and, more specifically with the quantity and quality of operational research supporting each of its phases.

While LSP materials abound, there is unfortunately little corresponding evidence of preliminary research or formative and summative evaluation having been carried out on which to base these materials (See Fig. 1)

The reasons are obvious - those funding such projects invariably want tangible evidence of progress, and success is not uncommonly measured in terms of the institution's name appearing in print on the cover of a collection of teaching materials.

Now, by operational research, we mean research which provides a body of information capable of informing decisions about needs, language use, teaching points, etc., in fact, decisions involved at every phase of the total LSP operation. Examples of such research both on-line, i.e. related to a specific project but generalizable to other situations and off-line i.e. carried out independently of an LSP teaching project (Sinclair 1978) are indicated in Fig. 1 in the right-hand column.

Figure 1.

SCHEMA ILLUSTRATING THE UNIFIED NATURE OF THE TOTAL ESP OPERATION

(CREATION STAGE)

(See also Gorosch (1978); Sinclair (1978); Mackay and Mountford (1978))

|                                          |                                                                                                                                                                              | <u>Selected Examples<br/>Operational<br/>Research</u> |
|------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
|                                          | <u>Focus on Purpose</u>                                                                                                                                                      | <u>Basic Information<br/>Gathering Phase</u>          |
| Point of departure                       | Information gathering instruments                                                                                                                                            | Munby                                                 |
| Provide                                  | Information about student needs                                                                                                                                              | Cost et al.                                           |
| From which are<br>identified             | Special purposes in terms of<br>operational skills                                                                                                                           |                                                       |
|                                          | <u>Focus on Language &amp; Language Use</u>                                                                                                                                  | <u>Production Phase</u>                               |
| On the basis of which<br>are selected    | Texts                                                                                                                                                                        | Mountford                                             |
| Which provide                            | Descriptions of some or all of<br>the language deemed necessary                                                                                                              | Selinker; Selinker<br>Tyma, Smith, Remler             |
|                                          | <u>Focus on Teaching, Learning and<br/>Testing</u>                                                                                                                           |                                                       |
| From which are selected<br>and sequenced | Teaching points                                                                                                                                                              | Morrison                                              |
| On the basis of which                    | Teaching materials and testing<br>instruments are developed                                                                                                                  | Morrow                                                |
|                                          | <u>Focus on Classroom Interaction</u>                                                                                                                                        |                                                       |
| And                                      | Appropriate teacher-training<br>is undertaken                                                                                                                                | Ewer<br>Mackay and Bosquet                            |
|                                          | <u>Focus on Evaluation</u>                                                                                                                                                   | <u>Evaluation and<br/>Revision Phase</u>              |
| Then                                     | Materials are taught under<br>observed conditions to determine<br>their day-to-day effectiveness<br>and subsequently modified in the<br>light to feedback                    | Mackay                                                |
|                                          |                                                                                                                                                                              | <u>Summative Evaluation</u>                           |
| And                                      | The congruence between the goals<br>set and student performance is<br>determined. Materials and<br>methodological procedures are<br>revised in the light of this information | Aiken and Bachman                                     |

## ILLUSTRATION IN TWO MODES OF SCIENTIFIC DISCOURSE

This project arose from our observation that non-native speaking students at an English-speaking university, even those who had previously undergone instruction in listening comprehension, had great difficulty in following a lecture on an academic subject. In several informal discussions with some of these foreign students, several factors which appeared to contribute to their difficulties were identified, including the way in which the lecturer used the blackboard during the class. Students complained that they were unsure as to how what he wrote on the board was related to what he said. Further discussion indicated, on the other hand, that the same students has distinctly less difficulty in understanding how illustrations and figures in textbooks related to the surrounding co-text.

On examining the kinds of materials used for ESL instruction in reading and in listening comprehension we discovered that most frequently the same textual materials were used for both modes. Passages were extracted from textbooks, journals, etc. and used in their written form for the reading class. The recorded version of the same text was often used for practice listening comprehension. Moreover, many of the major special purpose ESL courses in reading instruction also supply recorded versions of the reading texts for listening comprehension practice as if the difference were merely a question of channel

-oral or visual.

It was likely then, we felt, that students were having difficulty understanding academic lectures because illustration was used in a different way in that mode from that which they were used to in written texts. We therefore set about investigating the hypothesis that there would be describable differences between the use of illustration in the oral presentation of academic information and the use of illustration in the written mode.

### Procedure

We videotaped three unscripted academic lectures all of which made use of the blackboard during presentation. These lectures, though complete, were only of 8-10 minutes duration each and contained approximately 1,500-2,000 words each. They were presented by academics specialized in their respective fields to fellow academics from a variety of fields as part of seminar on university teaching. The use of the blackboard by each of the lecturers was examined in detail and the various uses summarized and, to some extent categorized. The resulting description was compared with a description of the use of illustration in academic textbooks dealing with the same topics as the lectures. The topics were the sheepbreeding industry, character generation, and central heating systems.

## Findings

We found that there were describable differences between the uses of illustration in the oral mode and in the written mode. Our findings are summarized in Table 1 below.

| <u>SPOKEN</u>                                                    | <u>WRITTEN</u>                                                    |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Illustrations (blackboard)                                       | Illustrations (photographs, tables)                               |
| are: DYNAMIC                                                     | are: STATIC                                                       |
| USUALLY INCOMPLETE                                               | ALMOST ALWAYS COMPLETE                                            |
| USUALLY UNTITLED                                                 | ALWAYS CLEARLY TITLED                                             |
| serve a mnemonic purpose for subsequent reference                | serve a complementary purpose to the written text                 |
| bear an "in other words..." relationship to the spoken discourse | bear an "in addition to..." relationship to the written discourse |

Table 1. Summary of Characteristics of use of Illustration in Spoken and Written Modes of Academic Instruction.

## Discussion

We will use examples only from the lecture and the written text on sheepbreeding in our discussion. As Table 1 shows, there are several differences between the use of illustrations, in this case the use of the blackboard only, in spoken academic discourse. First of all what the author chooses to illustrate is different and his choice is, in part, determined by the basic differences between speech and writing. Speech is ephemeral and therefore the topics of a lecture will often be presented graphically for easy subsequent reference. For

example, in the sheepbreeding lecture, the author puts up the following diagram as a mnemonic for one of his principal topics:

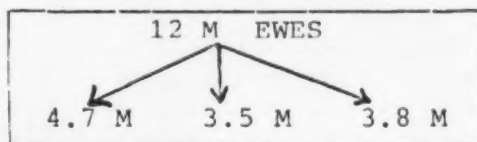


Diagram 1. Illustration Serving as Mnemonic for the Classification of the Breeding Ewe Population in the U.K.

He refers to the illustration as a "structure", a "classification" of the total number of ewes in Britain. The various components are labelled only orally.

Likewise his illustration reproduced in diagram 2 is referred to as "the structure of the sheepbreeding industry itself" where each initial represents a breed of sheep and X represents "is bred to".

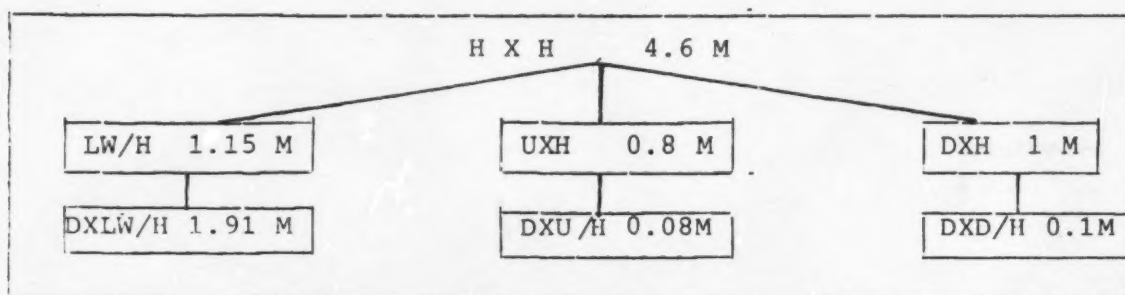


Diagram 2. Illustration serving as a mnemonic for the comments on the breeding and lamb production structure of the sheepbreeding industry in the U.K.

As wholes, these two diagrams are macro-illustrations, they are mnemonics for the topics of the lecture, for what is being

talked about. However, they can be broken up into sub-parts and each part can be talked about independently of the structure within which it fits. For example, the top line of boxes is referred to as "three breeding situations as opposed to geographical ones" and the bottom line of boxes is referred to as "the structure of meat (i.e.lamb) production". They are, however, labelled or discussed only orally once the mnemonic is available for reference.

It is this constant movement from reference to the structure as a whole to reference to the component parts of the structure which can be confusing. The author's vague gestures towards the board and deictic use of "this" and "there" are often insufficient to identify precisely whether it is the structure itself or one of its component parts which is being talked about. The illustrations are incomprehensible without the spoken component and the spoken component is incomprehensible without the illustrations. They are mutually dependent upon one another; together they make up the discourse.

In the written mode, on the other hand, the reader can refer back in the text in order to keep the topic and its components in mind and so illustration as a mnemonic is less necessary. In fact, illustrations in the written mode appear to bear a less integral relationship to the discourse. In the sheepbreeding text they tended to be photographs of breeds of sheep or tables of sheep populations which could not be handled easily in words. These illustrations are always accompanied

by an adequate explanatory title and are usually understandable independently of the written discourse. Likewise the text contains a few, and sometimes even no, references to the illustrations. Where a reference does exist, it is frequently only a simple instruction - "see Fig. 1".

The following patterns associated with illustration in the unscripted lectures were identified:

- 
- |                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Statement of intention to use the board: where the lecturer indicates that he is about to illustrate   | <p>1.1 <u>Referring to macro-illustration</u></p> <p>"... the structure I'm gonna give you"</p> <p>1.2 <u>Referring to sub-parts of the illustration</u></p> <p>".. three categories which I'd just like to put up for you"</p>                                                                    |
| 2. Actual use of the board: where the lecturer writes up what he has already referred to OR something new | <p>2.1 <u>Referring to sub-parts of the illustration</u></p> <p>"of these twelve-million ewes we have something like four point seven million which are pure-bred..."</p>                                                                                                                          |
| 3. Reference to what has already been put on the board                                                    | <p>3.1 <u>Referring to the macro-illustration</u></p> <p>"I'd like to make one or two points on these figures before we go on..."</p> <p>3.2 <u>Referring to sub-parts of the illustration</u></p> <p>"Now, of these ewes that we have here, the three point eight million cross-bred ewes..."</p> |

Note that, in patterns 1 and 3 above, the lecturer can refer to a macro-illustration (a specific element of the topic). In pattern 2, however, where he is actually engaged in writing on

the board he invariably accompanies his efforts with oral comment which is restricted to the immediate element in hand. In fact experience has shown most of us that it is almost impossible to write something on the board and talk about something else at the same time!

The techniques the lecturer uses in referring to his illustrations can also be broken down into six major categories:

1. deictic plus name plus gesture towards the illustration

e.g. "given that classification..."

"This structure that I've put up here..."

2. deictic plus name plus point specifically to part of the illustration

"this particular box up there..."

" in all those matings there..."

3. deictic plus gesture

"... but I want to divide these up by different breeds..."

4. deictic plus points specifically

"... from that (points) we have another 3.5 million ewes..."

5. name

"... so we can see that the Downland ram plays a fairly important role..."

6. name plus specify place on board

"... 3 million of the matings are by Downland rams (points)..."

In this brief report we are making no claims that our findings are valid for data beyond that which we examined. There is evidence, however, that some, at least, of these characteristics are present in other unscripted lectures on different topics given by different lecturers and in others texts. What our results do appear to establish is that it is a serious oversimplification of the matter to believe that because we expose students to recorded versions of written texts we are thereby training them in the ability to understand unscripted lectures.

#### The Lexical Cohesion Research

The purpose of this study was to uncover the patterns of lexical cohesion in spoken scientific discourse. Over the past few years, as the main focus of attention of linguists and language teachers has been gradually shifting from a predominantly syntactic bias to a more semantic one, a great deal of attention has been devoted to post-sentence level grammar, particularly to the cohesive features that make a text a text rather than a set of syntactically well-formed but semantically disconnected sentences. Theoretical models dealing with the discourse aspect of language have been proposed, and exercise types trying to convert these into a practical teaching methodology were designed and implemented. However, virtually all of these deal predominantly with syntactic cohesion and deal rather scantily if at all with lexical cohesion. For example, in their study of Cohesion in English

Halliday and Hasan (1976) devote only 18 pages out of a total of 374 to patterns of lexical cohesion.

Thus, the purpose of this study was to apply the findings of past research as well as our own observations to the examination of lexical cohesion in scientific discourse, and, in a second stage, to see if and how these could be applied to the development of teaching materials.

#### The Data

The copies of text to be analyzed was a set of four unscripted university lectures dealing with, respectively, numerical analysis, the sheepbreeding industry, character-generation and central heating systems. While the sample was somewhat restricted, it was deemed sufficient for this study, since its purpose was primarily exploratory, and descriptive as opposed to quantitative.

The study revealed three main categories of lexical cohesion: referente, re-iteration and collocation. These categories were originally proposed by Halliday and Hasan (1976). We will limit the discussion to one aspect that appears not to have been reported in previous research, that is, macro-collocation patterns.

Collocation patterns can be found at two levels. The passages observed contained micro-patterns and macro-patterns. The former involve lexical elements which cohere with other elements in the same sentence or in sentences immediately

before or after, while the latter involve chains of cohesive patterns across several sentences. For the purpose of this presentation we will limit our reporting to the macro-collocation patterns.

Fig. 2 is an illustration of a case where a given function will produce a chain of lexical cohesion. The passage on numerical analysis constitutes a set of interlinking definitions.

The speaker first introduces his subject, which in fact, could be regarded as a statement of intent. He then defines numerical analysis, specifies what the problems are, defines linear problems, etc. Thus, there is a powerful cohesive chain represented by the lexical elements:

|           |            |          |           |          |          |
|-----------|------------|----------|-----------|----------|----------|
| numerical | scientific | linear   | problems  | sparse   | matrices |
| analysis  | problem    | problems | involving | matrices | with 0   |
|           |            |          | matrices  |          | elements |

The passage on character generation in Fig. 4 follows a basically similar pattern. However, it is somewhat more complicated since more optional elements are inserted. (See Fig. 3).

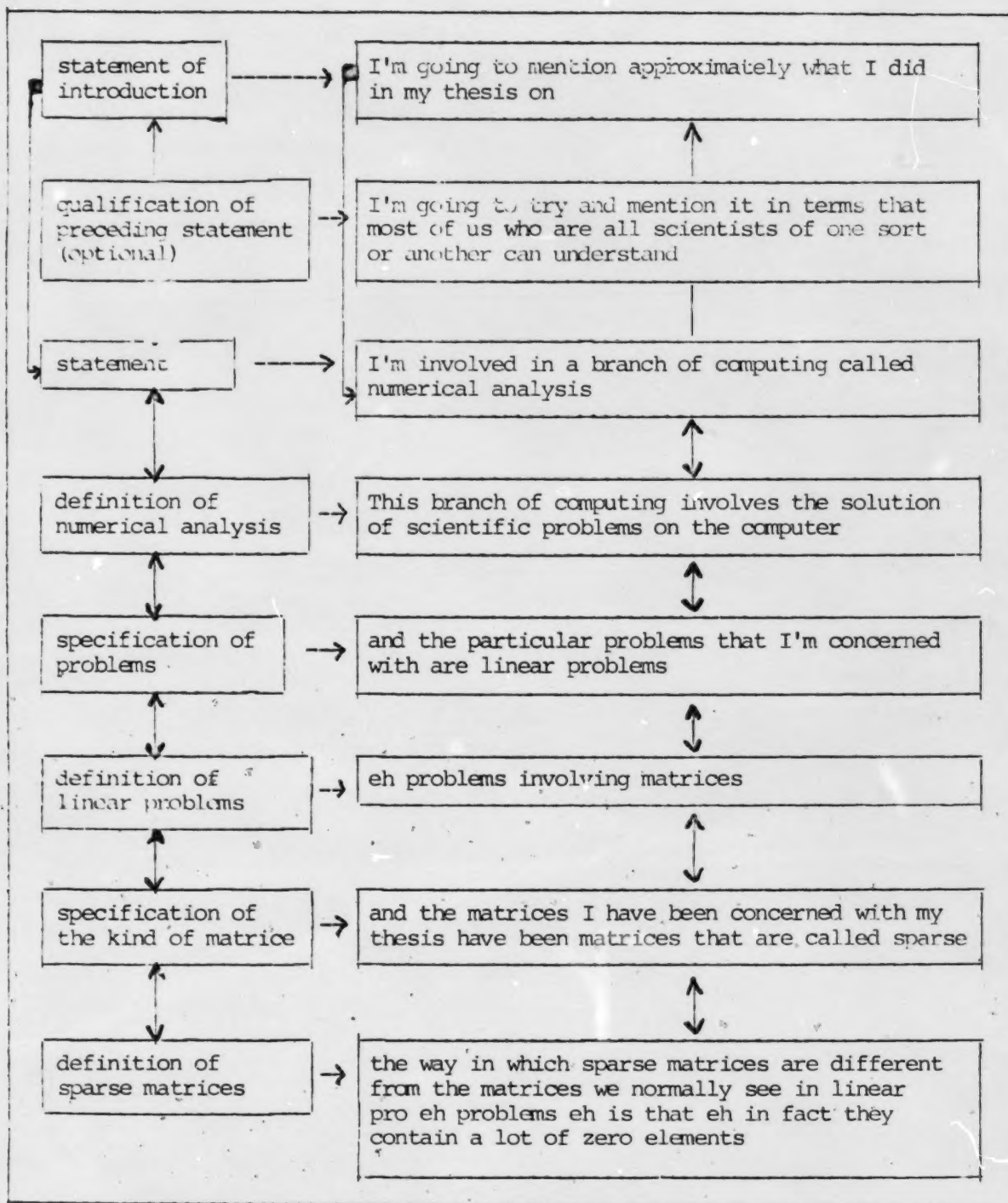


FIG. 2 Macro-collocation Patterns in "Numerical Analysis" Text.

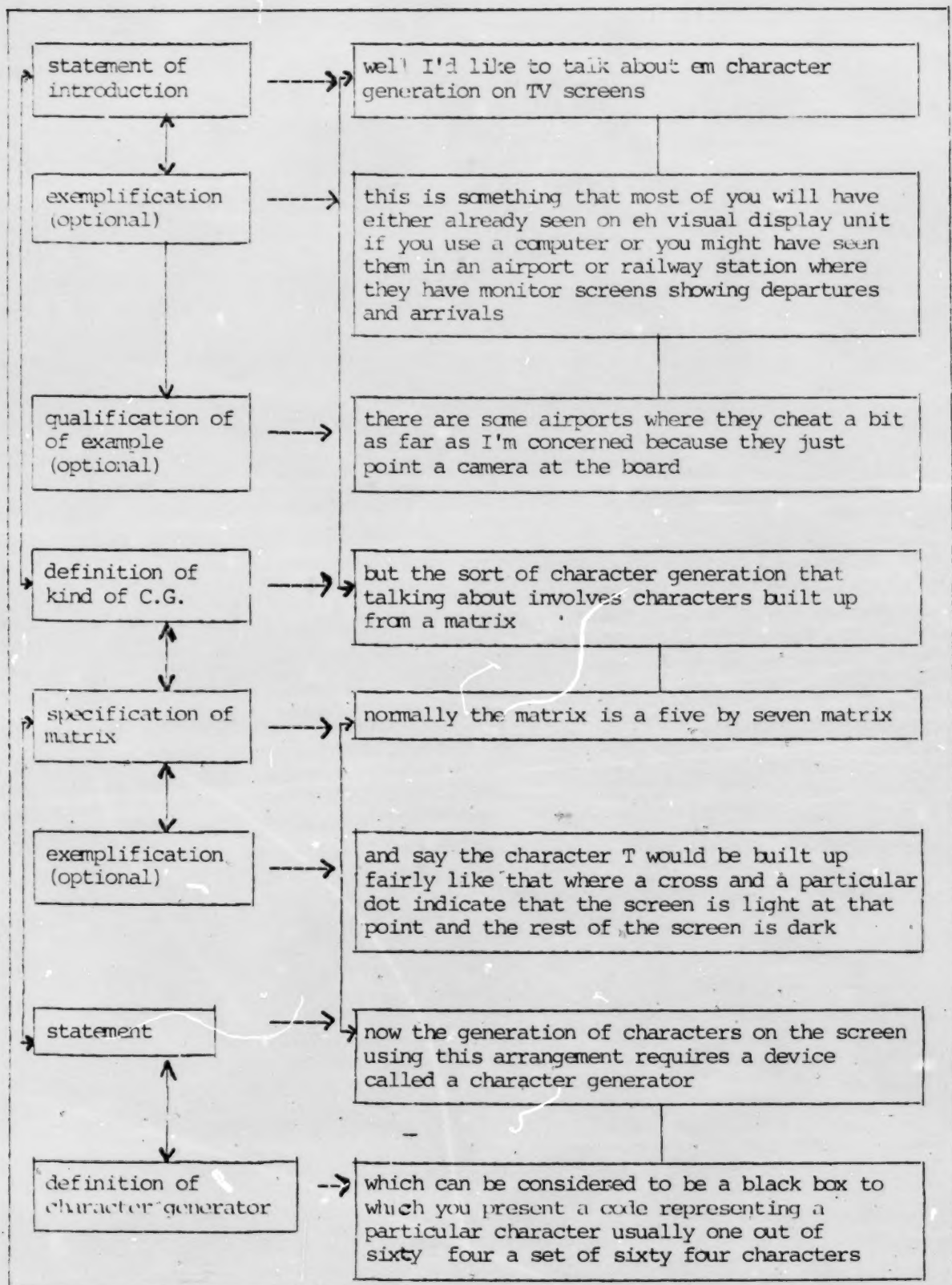


FIG. 3 Macro-collocation Patterns in "Character Generation" Test

These elements are described as optional because they can be withdrawn without affecting the overall intelligibility of the passage. For example, consider the two following deletions from Fig. 2

...I'm going to mention approximately what I did my thesis on. I'm involved in a branch of computing called numerical analysis.

...I'm going to mention approximately what I did my thesis on. I'm going to try to mention it in terms that most of us who are scientists of one sort or another can understand. This branch involves the solution of scientific problems on the computer.

The first example is still perfectly clear, whereas the second one is not. However, the first deletion affects an optional element while the second affects an essential one. If all optional elements were withdrawn, both passages would then follow an identical pattern of:

STATEMENT--DEFINITION--SPECIFICATION--DEFINITION--ETC.

Fig. 4 divides the 12 million ewes in the U.K. into three major categories. As such, its major function is one of classification. Each category is introduced and then defined. Although the pattern is not as clearly marked, this passage also contains a set of interlinking definitions. Each category is defined as it is introduced in the classification pattern. Moreover, this passage also has extended collocation chains. The constant recurrence of the various categories of

sheep provides a powerful cohesive device. As illustrated in Fig. 5, there is a general pattern that goes as follows:

(a) superordinate ( e.g. sheep), (b) sex-marked (e.g. ewe, ram), (c) sex-marked and breeding (e.g. sire,dam), etc. As can be seen from the text in Fig. 5 this does not mean that the lecturer necessarily refers to the different sub-categories of sheep in the order in which they appear in Fig. 5.

### Conclusions

Although these results are based on limited data, they suggest that there are describable pattern of lexical cohesion in spoken scientific discourse.

In order that students can be taught to look for this cohesion in an attempt to facilitate comprehension, descriptions of the typical patterns are needed and these in turn build in the most effective way into pedagogic materials.

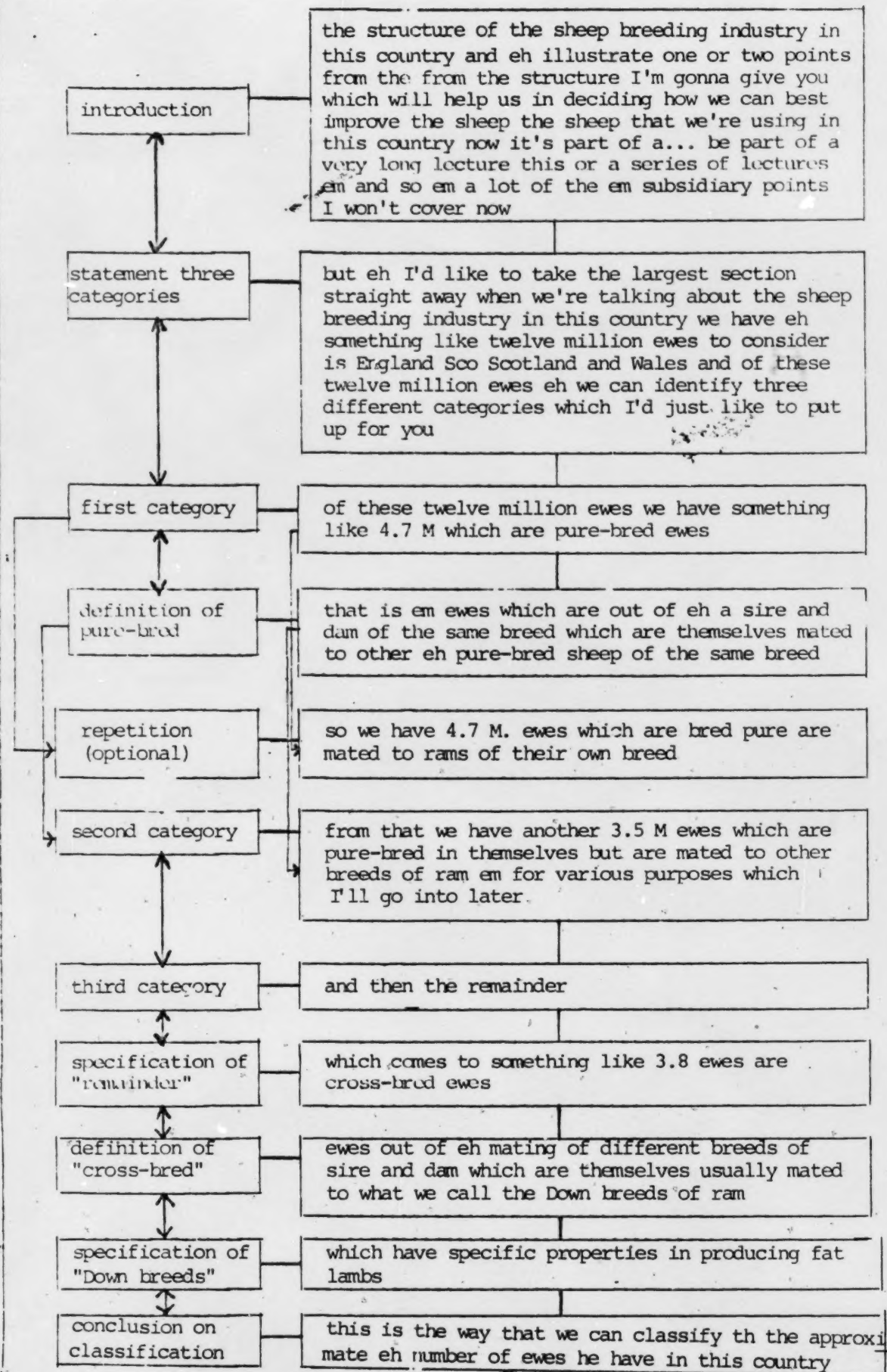


FIG. 4 Macro-collocation Patterns in "The Sheepbreeding Industry in the U.K." Text

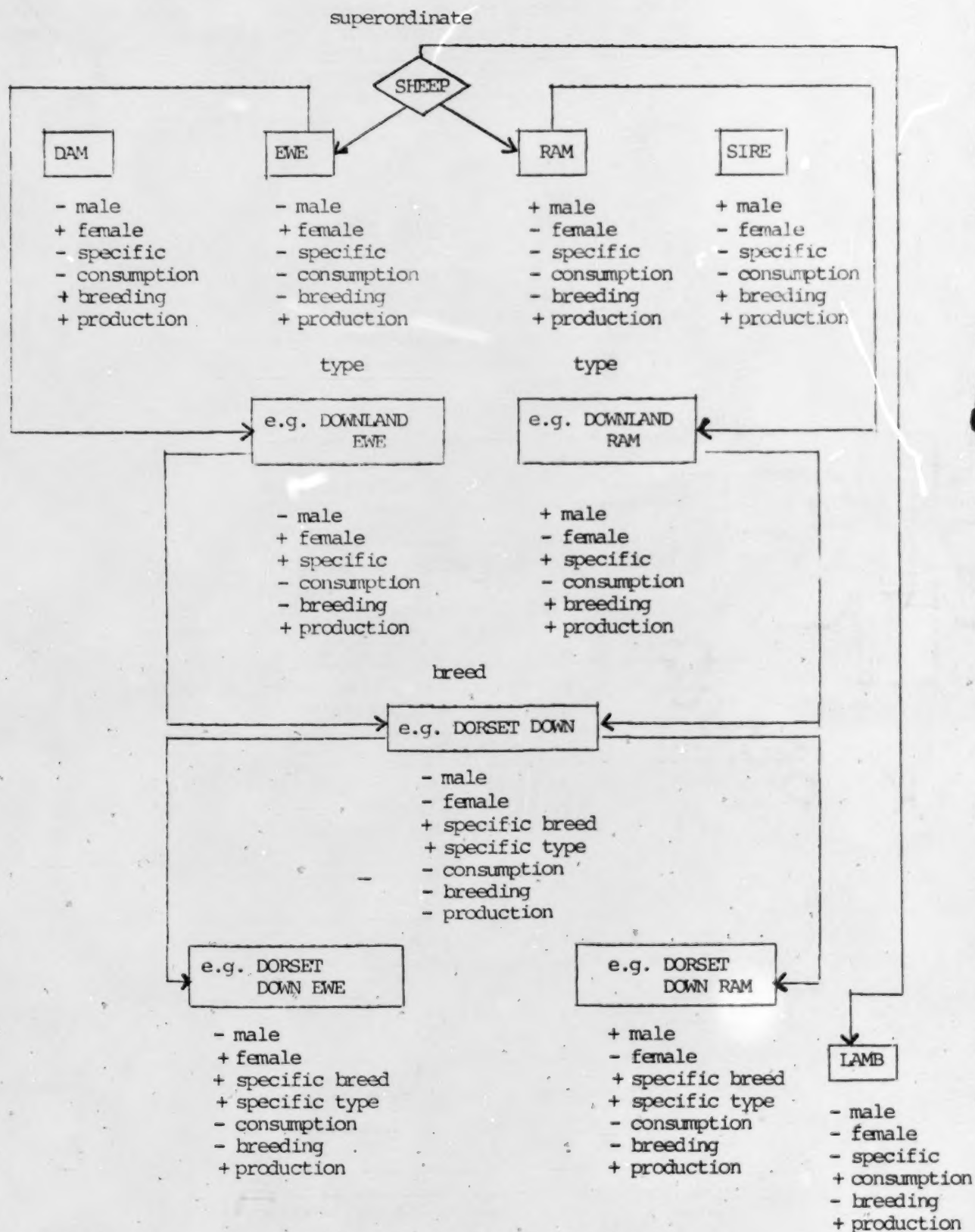


FIG. 5 Diagram Showing Semantic Cohesion Provided by Lexical Items in "The Sheepbreeding Industry in the U.K." Text

## THE GRAPH AND FIGURE INTERPRETATION RESEARCH

### Purpose

Many university textbooks employ not only prose but other, largely non-linguistic forms to express information. The purpose of this study was (i) to examine the kind of language associated with graphs and tables as reflected in the co-text, i.e. the accompanying or surrounding text and (ii) to determine whether or not there are describable differences between a text associated with an accompanying graph and that associated with an accompanying table. There are interesting and useful studies available, which demonstrate how graphs, tables and other non-linguistic devices used in text can be exploited for maximum language practice in the foreign language classroom. However, we felt that it was important, as a prior step, to characterize how these devices are used by scientific authors as opposed to exploring the variety of ways in which they can be manipulated by the teacher regardless of their characteristic use in texts (e.g. Cobb 1972; Mead and Lilley 1975; Gerighty 1978).

Hence, the need for such a study as this stems from the belief that visual presentations such as tables and graphs are not merely stylistic variants of linguistic expression but are independent forms which essentially complement, as opposed to substitute for, or even repeat, the information contained in the co-text.

Moreover, we hypothesized that, in the accompanying co-text, formally and functionally different language would be found associated on the one hand with tables and the other hand with graphs. One of our working assumptions was that language associated with graphs and tables is descriptably different from language which is associated with neither.

#### Source Data

The data was taken from the Second Report to the Club of Rome (Mesarovic and Pestel, 1974) a book which presents an overview of the ecological crisis facing mankind through textual explanation and graphic and tabular statistical information. Of the various kinds of table and graph we chose the frequency table and the curve graph.

The co-text of 3 graphs and 3 tables selected at random was then isolated and analyzed to determine:

1. the frequency of the characteristic grammatical features and communicative functions in the discourse;
2. the difference, if any, between the two.

#### Descriptive Analysis Employed

A traditional approach was taken to the syntactic description of the co-text associated with the graphs or tables. Jacobson's model of functional labelling was used for the gross characterization, the macrofunctions of the co-text and an intuitive labelling was used for the micro-functions.

### Summary of Results

The macrofunction associated with both tables and graphs was the referential -that which relates what is being said to the context. (See Fig. 6).

### The Graphs

The predominant microfunctions were condition, prediction and hypothesis. This is understandable as the purpose underlying inferential statistics is to infer from a sample to a population, and the graph presents, in the most appropriate non-linguistic manner, the empirical results of either the whole or part of the research.

The grammatical features common to all three graphs included the conditional tense, "if" clauses, modals and the passive and subjunctive moods. Both microfunctions of prediction and hypothesis employ the use of the conditional. Again this is to be expected since a graph illustrates the relationship holding between two (or more) variables.

### The Tables

Of particular interest in this study was the lack of co-text associated with the tables. Whereas in the case of the graphs the co-text was made to interpret the implications of the graph, in the case of the tables they were seen as a way of presenting information which would have been difficult to organize verbally and as such needed no explanation or

discussion. This phenomenon coincides with Marder's observation (Marder, 1960) that information involving numerical values is difficult to write about coherently. The same information in a tabular form is simpler for the writer, and the reader can see the whole all at once, as it were, and more easily understand the qualities and comparisons inherent in the numbers.

### Conclusions

It appeared from the analysis of our data that our original hypothesis was supported, viz. that there are formal differences at the level of syntax and communicative function between the co-text associated with tables and that associated with graphs.

The implication for ESP teaching and learning is that it may well be more important to familiarize the student with the language characteristically employed to supplement graphs separately from that used to interpret tables than to devise imaginative ways of exploiting graphs and tables without regard to how they relate to the language of the scientific or technical writer.

FIG. 6 LANGUAGE FEATURES ASSOCIATED WITH GRAPH INTERPRETATION

| <u>Level of Description</u> | <u>Characteristics</u>                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <u>Syntax</u>               | <p>Mood - Passive</p> <p>Tense - Conditional subjunctive ("if" clause)</p> <p>Modals - might, may, can, could</p> <p>Connectives - however, while, otherwise, so that</p>                                                       |
| <u>Lexis</u>                | <p>nouns: average, ratio, gap, patterns,<br/>analysis level</p> <p>verbs: increase, reflect, reach, achieve,<br/>remain, total, rely</p> <p>adjectives: absolute, relative, prevailing,<br/>annual, accumulated, cumulative</p> |
| <u>Discourse</u>            | <p><u>Macrofunctions</u> - referential</p> <p><u>Microfunctions</u> - predictions<br/>- hypotheses<br/>- interpretations</p>                                                                                                    |

### ENGLISH FOR OCCUPATIONAL PURPOSES\*

The project was to design a course in English for persons whose main task is to clean and service buildings and equipment in a university setting. The course was designed at the request of virtually non-English speaking building services staff themselves who saw it as a means of enhancing their chances of promotion from their current level as servicepersons "C" or "B" (cleaners, janitors) to that of servicepersons "A" (porters), the highest rung in their employment ladder. Because of its specific aim and because of the limited educational background of the participants (average of only 3 years of formal schooling) the course differs from most English language courses for adults. Traditional ESL courses aim at mastery of virtually all aspects of the language --its entire verb system, pronoun system, etc.-- whether or not all of these are of immediate use to the learners (Wilkins, 1973). Exceptions to these are all encompassing courses designed for special academic, professional, occupational or those other purposes --courses in English for Special Purposes (see Mackay and Mountford, 1977). The Building Services course described here, however, differs even from the usual Special Purposes courses in that the latter are usually designed for a population with

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\* This work, reported fully in Gathbonton (1977), was supported by funds provided by the Personnel and Continuing Education Departments at McGill University. The author wishes to thank David Levy for his help in setting up the research.

higher academic or professional preparation (e.g. students, doctors, hoteliers, stewardesses-- see British Council Report, 1976). In respect of the general lack of previous formal schooling of the participants, this course is rather unique. To our knowledge, only Jupp and Hodlin, 1976, report a course designed for a similarly low educational and professional background - for immigrant workers in a factory setting.

In designing this course, it was necessary to first determine the communicative needs of the students so that the instructional materials would reflect what they needed to know in using the languages in their daily work situations (James, 1974; Morrow and Johnson, 1977; Richterich, 1973; Strevens, 1975; Wilkins, 1973) and secondly, to design the syllabus so that the course could be effectively and efficiently taught given the students' background.

By communicative needs we mean the requirements arising from the linguistic demands made on individuals in the variety of social situations encountered in the process of daily life (Richterich, 1973). For the building services staff these needs reflect the language requirements of their present work as servicepersons "B".and "C" and their future work as servicepersons "A". These needs were assessed by direct observation, interviews, and questionnaires. For example, observations were made of servicepersons of various ranks (porters, area supervisors, cleaners) noting when, where and how each group checked in and out of work, what activities were

done and where, what furniture and fixtures were handled, what special assignments were given to cleaners, how these were related, by whom and what messages, complaints and difficulties were communicated to them. Interviews were also conducted to determine the cleaners' country or origin, native language, previous training in English (if any) and expectations from the course.

Questionnaires were also sent to students, professors, secretaries whose offices and/or laboratories were serviced by the cleaners in order to find out the extent and "quality" of their interaction with the cleaners, area supervisors and porters in their building.

All these observations indicated that the cleaners' linguistic needs included giving and receiving instructions; making, denying or accepting requests either in face-to-face interactions or by telephone; giving, accepting or answering reprimands and censures about their jobs; initiating and engaging in conversations about themselves, families, etc.; filling out forms and reports, reading and understanding notices, memos, messages, and answering all enquires about the building they work in, and the activities and persons who use them.

From the observations made of the servicepersons at work it was clear that they did not require a sophisticated mastery of English grammar to function effectively in their jobs. Hence, the course syllabus designed for them focussed primarily upon

the language functions (Johnson, 1977) they needed to be able to perform in specific situations in their work setting rather than on examples of grammar rules or paradigms. A list of basic expressions, phrases and general vocabulary were compiled under headings such as greetings, making requests, explaining mistakes, apologizing, bidding farewell, praising and censuring. In one important respect the syllabus designed for the servicepersons differs from traditional English syllabi, viz. it focuses upon those parts of the language system only that are of immediate use to the learners rather than upon the grammatical system as a whole. The teaching of such a "selective" syllabus, of course, requires a different pedagogical approach in the classroom and different organization of the lessons. Thus, the specific units into which the lessons were divided were not the usual grammatical categories and structures found in traditional courses but the various language-related activities performed by the servicepersons during their work hours.

In teaching the course, a "communicative competence" approach was taken in the sense that the emphasis was upon communicative ability, the ability to say the right thing to the right person at the right time. In each lesson the teacher generally focussed upon two or more basic expressions and encouraged the students to use these in a variety of language activities and situations. The principle underlying the selection and structuring of the language activities is

that the students would learn effectively those and only those utterances which they practice in situations where a real need to communicate is present.

The course was evaluated during instructions and after completion and it was evident from the results that the considerable amount of time, effort and money which had been invested in the needs investigation stage had contributed significantly to both the feeling of satisfaction on the part of the learners and their actual increased communicative performance in their work.

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